FIRST TASKS AS PRIME MINISTER

3. SURVEY OF THE POSITION

In order to understand the nature and gravity of the undertaking with which the new Government was confronted, it is necessary to make a rapid survey of the position at the end of 1916.

We were on the eve of the fourth campaign of the War. The conditions under which it was to be fought had already been settled by military and naval strategy and by events and circumstances, some of the most fateful of which, as I have already related, I had vainly endeavoured to modify or change. It was my misfortune to be called upon to grapple with the consequences of policies which I had resisted step by step.

The harvest of Kdes

Three of the Allied Powers, Belgium, Serbia and Roumania, had been almost completely destroyed as military entities that counted in the struggle. Russia, still huge, was sprawling on the ground, with formidable possibilities if she rose with the remnant of her great strength to face the foe. But no one knew whether she could or would rise. She excited more conjecture than confidence. The overwhelming preponderance in man-power which had given the Allies such a false sense of security and lured them in 1915 and 1916 into enterprises where human life

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